

Gaslit Nation Transcript
27 July 2022
"Handle With Care"
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[\[audio clip of Scott Pelley of 60 Minutes interviewing Reality Winner\]](#)

Scott Pelley (00:00:00):

The president was raising doubt that Russia attacked the 2016 election. His interview with John Dickerson was typical at the time.

Donald Trump in interview with John Dickerson (00:00:08):

I'll go along with Russia. Could have been China. It could have been a lot of different groups.

Scott Pelley (00:00:12):

But it was Russia and the NSA knew it. Reality Winner had seen proof in a top secret report on an in-house newsfeed.

Reality Winner (00:00:22):

I just kept thinking, my God, somebody needs to step forward and put this right. Somebody.

Scott Pelley (00:00:31):

The secret report said in 2016, the Russian military executed cyber espionage against 122 local government organizations targeting officials involved in the management of voter registration systems. It was top secret in part because it revealed what the US knew about Russian tactics. Winner told us she was exposing a White House coverup. She printed the report, dropped it in this mailbox addressed anonymously to an online news source that specialized in government wrongdoing. The NSA report was published a month later.

You knew it was stamped top secret. You knew what that meant.

Reality Winner (00:01:17):

I knew that. I knew it was secret, but I also knew that I had pledged service to the American people and at that point in time, it felt like they were being led astray.

Scott Pelley (00:01:30):

Winner was caught as soon as the top secret report surfaced. The NSA could see on its network that she printed it. She drove home to a new reality.

Reality Winner (00:01:41):

A plain black sedan came up behind my car and two men in polo shirts came out and introduced themselves as FBI agents.

Scott Pelley (00:01:50):

A transcript shows the FBI agents told her the interrogation was voluntary and they didn't mention her right to an attorney. Winner lied about mailing the report, then confessed and was arrested. The government hit her with the most serious possible charge: espionage. Bail was denied after prosecutors told a judge that Winner wrote in her diary that she was mad enough to burn the White House. They suggested she might defect to the Taliban. To the public, they said this:

US NSA Official (00:02:24):

Winner's willful purposeful disclosure caused exceptionally grave damage to US national security.

Scott Pelley (00:02:31):

But what prosecutors called “grave damage” was a bombshell of truth to the Federal Election Assistance Commission, which helps secure the vote. In hours, the commission issued an alert on the NSA document leak. It spelled out the top secret email addresses utilized by the attackers and urged officials to check email logs. Blindsided by Winner's revelation, the Commission called for full disclosure of election security intelligence. Two former officials told us, “Reality winner helped secure the 2018 midterm election.”

[intro theme music]

Sarah Kendzior (00:03:20):

I'm Sarah Kendzior, the author of the best sellers, *The View from Flyover Country* and *Hiding in Plain Sight* and of the upcoming book, *They Knew: How a Culture of Conspiracy Keeps America Complacent*, which comes out September 13th and is available for pre-order. Now

Andrea Chalupa (00:03:37):

I'm Andrea Chalupa, a journalist and filmmaker, and the writer and producer of the journalistic thriller, *Mr. Jones* about Stalin's genocide famine in Ukraine. And you can watch *Mr. Jones* on the side of the Russian “press” office—quotation marks around press—in Washington, DC on the evening of August 6th, which is a Saturday. There's going to be a screening of *Mr. Jones* on the side of the Russian “press” office, which is really the propaganda war machine office, which is, you know, Russia has propaganda as part of their military. They're very proud of that. So come watch *Mr. Jones*. The Russians are gonna hate it. Wherever you are in the world, you can livestream us screening *Mr. Jones* on the side of the Russian press office in Washington, DC on Saturday, August 6th at sundown.

Sarah Kendzior (00:04:33):

And this is *Gaslit Nation*, a podcast covering corruption in the United States and rising autocracy around the world. And we have a lot on both of those topics today, but first you have some announcements, Andrea.

Andrea Chalupa (00:04:47):

Yes. So our opening clip, as you heard, was Reality Winner. We'll link to that *60 Minutes* episode in our show notes, which you can find on the Patreon page for this week's episode. And we are going to have a very suspenseful live taping of *Gaslit Nation* on Tuesday, August 9th at 11:00 AM Eastern. You can get access to that by supporting the show at the Democracy Defender level or higher. And that also gives you

our bonus episodes, the Gaslit Nation Early Show that comes out every Tuesday before the public episode. And you can submit questions, do the Q&As with us. It's a lot of fun.

Sarah Kendzior (00:05:26):

Oh yes. So if you're the kind of person who wants to spend money to watch two women say, "Can you hear me now? What about now? Can you hear me now?" for like, you know, a solid 5 minutes.

Andrea Chalupa:

30 minutes.

Sarah Kendzior:

[laughs] 30 minutes—then this is the show for you. No, it should be good. And then you'll also have the opportunity to ask us questions live and see our facial expressions normally hidden from you.

Andrea Chalupa (00:05:49):

The grimace. The grimace I wear on my face the entire time Sarah's talking. And the head shaking.

Sarah Kendzior(00:05:52):

The eye rolling. The sighing. The hands in the air. Alright. Alright. Alright, alright. So today we're gonna talk about 9/11 and we're gonna talk about January 6th, two days that live in infamy and have more in common than one would suspect. So I'm just gonna get right into this. I did a lot of research during our interview series re: hobbies like embroidery, hiking, kayaking, solving 9/11. Anyway, I'm gonna start with the January 6th Committee. Last week, the January 6th Committee had what is for now their final hearing, featuring the coward, Josh Hawley, running from the mob he incited, and a previously unseen Trump rehearsal speech in which Trump refused to condemn the coup that he planned. And this was a primetime hearing. It was very popular in the ratings and there may be more hearings this September. Andrea and I have been telling officials to do the hearings that they had promised us for the last few years so we're glad that they have finally gotten around to it.

Andrea Chalupa (00:06:59):

Public hearings on corruption and state crime are always good on principle because the government should always remain accountable to the public. That is its job. Being good on principle, however, is different from being good in practice, so even though we are in favor of the January 6th Committee hearings, it is also important to look for ways that they could be exploited. And a good way of doing that is to look toward history for lessons. In my new book, *They Knew*, which y'all should pre-order, I discuss 20th century hearings that succeeded in shifting public perception and bringing accountability. Among them, the Kefauver hearings on the mafia in the 1950s and the corruption hearings of the 1970s tied to the Church committee, the Pike committee, the Watergate investigation, and so on. These televised hearings are good models for the January 6th Committee to follow. In contrast, what is not a good model to follow is the 9/11 Commission and its hearings, which is why it is alarming that people on or associated with the 9/11 Commission are now involved in the January 6th hearings. Foremost among these people is Jamie Gorelick, Merrick Garland's best friend and mentor.

Sarah Kendzior(00:08:23):

She's also Jared and Ivanka's ethics lawyer and an all-purpose Forrest Gump of corruption who we have discussed many, many times on this show. I am not going to review the whole record again, so just check gaslitnationpod.com for information, transcripts and links. [Note: You can search our transcripts for "Jamie Gorelick" or other key terms]. I am however going to discuss in greater detail for the first time her role on the 9/11 Commission as an example of what not to do when investigating attacks against America. There is a formula at play here and it's disconcerting to see the same template used twice as it appears to be at this point with the January 6th Committee. So I'm gonna summarize the Jamie Gorelick coverup template and then get into some details. This is basically a five step plan. So the first step: let's address why one would need a coverup. It's because one is implicated in a crime, either as a perpetrator or simply as a witness. Gorelick served as the Deputy Attorney General of the DOJ for the Clinton administration from 1994 to 1997, which is how Merrick Garland got hired as her underling. In an interview in 2006, Gorelick admitted that she viewed the DOJ as her personal law firm and filled it with her friends who had been mentored alongside her by Trump and Epstein associate and lawyer, Alan Dershowitz, while they were at Harvard.

Sarah Kendzior (00:10:02):

So what did Gorelick do while at the Clinton DOJ? Lots of bad things, but the most infamous is that in 1995, she created a memo prohibiting intelligence agencies from sharing information, including information about terrorist attacks, sharing this both with each other and within certain parts of the agencies. This included, for example, information about the people plotting 9/11. So step one is being an insider to the crime. Step two is narrowing the timeframe of the investigation of the crime. What Gorelick's 1995 memo did in addition to keeping the CIA and the FBI and departments within those organizations from sharing information, is it made it difficult to tie new crimes to past crimes. She believed that every crime should be looked at only in the immediate years before which it was committed. So prior acts of terrorism, like the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, or the ties between the Oklahoma City bombing and broader militant movements, the latter of which was very poorly investigated by her and Merrick Garland they were meant to be seen as discrete separate elements instead of pieces of a broader pattern.

Sarah Kendzior (00:11:18):

And you see these exact same bad tactics at play today when officials tried to divorce the 2020 coup plot and 2021 Capitol attack from the broader criminality of the Trump administration of those four years of a non-stop crime spree, not just by Trump but by members of his cabinet and members of his campaign staff. They also have tried to divorce the criminality of the Trump administration from all of the crimes its members and staff committed in decades prior; people like Roger Stone and Paul Manafort and Bill Barr and Michael Flynn, who just turn up again and again and again. In the Gorelick model, that must all be kept separate. And so part three of this template is to decontextualize the crime even further. Like I said, ignoring direct ties and recurrent actors.

Sarah Kendzior (00:12:22):

It's an extension of the refusal to examine the scope in terms of time. And so to give a contemporary example, this means ignoring that when you talk about the 2020 Stop the Steal campaign, led by Roger Stone, it means ignoring that Stone led the exact same campaign complete with the same slogans and the same threats in 2016. It means ignoring that Stone also helped lead the riots that helped get the father of January 6th Committee Liz Cheney into office as vice president in 2000. I'm bringing up Cheney because you may be asking, "Well, why would people go along with this? Why would anybody want these crimes to be decontextualized if helping understand the full context makes American security

tighter and protects the public? Why would people participate in this?" It's because they too are implicated in the crimes in some capacity, or their relatives are. This does not mean that they have committed a crime, but it means that they get nervous and uncomfortable when the crime is discussed.

Sarah Kendzior (00:13:33):

An elite operative trying to limit the scope of inquiry will therefore keep investigative circles insular and repetitive, installing the same people over and over, relying on nepotism and gerontocracy. This insularity guarantees that investigators will fail to tell the public the whole story. Part four of this lil' scheme is making sure that the people who committed the crime or witnessed the crime are the same people who control information about the crime. The greatest example of this is Gorelick herself, who served as a member of the 9/11 Commission and refused to testify in the hearings. This guaranteed narrative control, despite protests of officials, both Democrats and Republicans, and of the public. According to journalist Peter Lance, the only two people who were allowed to see all of the secret 9/11 documents were Gorelick and Philip Zelikow. Lance notes that in addition to writing the memo that made 9/11 ultimately possible, Gorelick was also the person who expedited the 1994 deportation of Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, the brother-in-law and former roommate of Osama bin Laden and a vital source of intelligence information.

Sarah Kendzior (00:14:53):

Lance quotes a former CIA analyst as saying about Gorelick, and this is the quote: "I remember people at CIA who were ripshit at the time over the decision. Not even speaking in retrospect, but contemporaneous with what the intelligence community knew about bin Laden, Khalifa's deportation was unreal." So there's that with Gorelick. And then there's the matter of Zelikow whose appointment to the 9/11 Commission also horrified observers. First, I'm gonna note that Gorelick and Zelikow were chosen to lead the 9/11 Commission after the first choice, Henry Kissinger, was naturally greeted with even deeper revulsion. So that was interesting in and of itself. Zelikow, who was a Bush official, was described by multiple intelligence officials as "the fox guarding the chicken coop", to again quote Lance's book. Zelikow and Gorelick blocked a number of topics from being investigated by the Commission, which infuriated the families of 9/11 victims.

Sarah Kendzior (00:16:01):

And as I said, Gorelick was called to testify about what she had done and witnessed in the Clinton DOJ and refused to do so, getting away with it because she's on the Commission. And so we're seeing, again, a repeat of this now. For reasons unknown, or perhaps being explained to you right now on this podcast, Gorelick was installed to oversee the January 6th Commission, despite obvious conflicts of interest, like her role as Ivanka and Jared's lawyer and her friendship with multiple Trump administration officials and lawyers tied to the coup, including both Bill Barr and Alan Dershowitz, and her lifelong relationship with Merrick Garland. There have been many indicators that the members of the January 6th Committee do not trust Merrick Garland's DOJ to do right by the American people. The main indication is Adam Schiff basically saying so multiple times over a year, as well as internal struggles over documents and testimony, which prompts me to wonder whether maybe Gorelick's presence has impacted these internal struggles.

Sarah Kendzior (00:17:12):

And also, as I said last week, whether it's led to people like Ivanka, Jared and Bill Barr using these hearings as an attempt to whitewash their own reputations. And so the final step in this coverup

template is to make sure that the committee is formed slowly, that it moves at a glacial pace, and that it takes forever to find obvious evidence. The January 6th Committee did not even form until last summer, and then it had one hearing, and then went on vacation. This was after the House had impeached Trump in February using only public domain evidence since there was such an enormous amount of it. There was no excuse for delaying the hearings and they would've been much more effective a year ago when these events were fresh in the public's mind. What the time lag did was give the DOJ and officials enough time to run out the clock on prosecution and to ignore obvious evidence in favor of new narratives and new sources of testimony.

Sarah Kendzior (00:18:19):

This is the same thing, yet again, that happened with the 9/11 Commission. And so now that I've outlined this template, I'm gonna read a few excerpts from Peter Lance's book, *Triple Cross*, which is a history of the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent investigation of how they happened. This book was published in 2010 and it's a very interesting book. It's very interesting to look back at this book 12 years later. It includes chapters with titles like "Promotions for Those Who Didn't See it Coming", so this is very much a book in the *Gaslit Nation* tradition. So I'm gonna read a few excerpts. Things that all these investigations have in common: Number one, Robert Mueller. Robert Mueller's presence. This is a quote from Lance: "Seven months after 9/11, Robert Mueller insisted that 'the hijackers left no paper trail.'"

Sarah Kendzior (00:19:12):

"In our investigation, we have not uncovered a single piece of paper either here in the US or in the treasure trove of information that has turned up in Afghanistan or elsewhere that mentioned any aspect of the September 11th plot." And then Lance says, "This, of course, turned out to be patently untrue. The contents of Yousef's own laptop contained the very blueprint of the 9/11 plot." And he goes on from there, gives many examples. And so, yay! Look! Again, you see Robert Mueller botching a major federal investigation related to our national security and lying about the evidence. So, that's interesting. You have a predetermined script. This is again from Peter Lance, written in 2010: "By the fall of 2003, I had developed a source on the Commission staff,"—the 9/11 Commission staff—"a former law enforcement officer who met with me regularly in New York City."

Sarah Kendzior (00:20:06):

"He gave me an early warning that the Commission had already begun to follow a predetermined script. Democrats and Republicans, he suggested, had gotten together and agreed up front to follow a limited investigation of the events, which would focus on the few years from 1998 forward." So again, that sounds familiar. Next one is a glacial pace, and then Lance says, "Frustrated by the glacial pace of the investigation, the source told me that by late 2003, only one of the eight groups set up to probe various aspects of the attack had issued subpoenas." Sound familiar? Once again, we see a committee refusing to issue or enforce subpoenas with the DOJ, again, playing along. We see a committee refusing to act with urgency about an urgent national security crisis. Another commonality: organized crime. Lance wondered, "Well, you know, what's going on here? Why is the 9/11 committee seeking to withhold evidence?" [paraphrased]

Sarah Kendzior (00:21:11):

And then he comes to this conclusion: "Why would America's most elite law enforcement and investigative agencies suppress such critical evidence? I concluded that the motive could be traced to a most surprising quarter: organized crime." And there's a lot on that. You should read the book. You'll

again find some common names. Finally, I'm going to leave you with some of Lance's thoughts, and this is the quote: "After years of studying the intelligence failures on the road to 9/11 and beyond, I've come to believe that Americans have reached a state of numbness, a kind of cynical paralysis grounded in the belief that they will never know the real truth behind the attacks. After the whitewashes described in this book by the 9/11 Commission, it's easy to understand how the average citizen might feel hopeless about ever solving that cold case. But the first step toward a new examination of the crime is a push for accountability."

Sarah Kendzior (00:22:09):

"The 9/11 Commission utterly failed on that point. But in this investigation, we have named names and focused the laser beam of accountability." And that's the end of his quote. And so I read this book for the first time a few months ago and reading that section, I felt like I was reading my own words. You know, it filled me with sorrow that so little has changed and that we are literally dealing with the same coverup artists, people like Gorelick. But I do think that Americans can learn from the past as long as they know what that past is. It is much easier for corrupt operatives to control people who do not understand what they are fighting. That is why I am bringing up these old books—these old accounts—now, so that people can understand we are dealing with a pattern of institutional obfuscation.

Sarah Kendzior (00:23:05):

The January 6th attacks differ greatly from 9/11 in many ways, but in part because they were planned right out in the open and aired on television, and we all knew they were coming. Here at *Gaslit Nation*, we did a preview special. This was not at all an attack that surprised Americans in the way that 9/11 did. And so this makes the feigned ignorance surrounding the evidence all the more inexcusable. We need to be vigilant students of history, always reminding the public of who knew what and when, so American democracy does not drown in this tide of forced forgetting. Alright. [claps]. I'm done. Thoughts? Thoughts and prayers?

Andrea Chalupa (00:23:48):

I thought you said bots, and I was like, that's appropriate.

Sarah Kendzior:

There's plenty of those as well.

Andrea Chalupa:

It's just, why is all this happening? What's in it for them? It's obvious. It's as we always say on the show: Corruption is an industry. A lot of people are getting wealthy, building generational wealth, off of corruption. Corruption is the norm. Why do you think Brexit happened? Why do you think the Kremlin was so eager to help Brexit happen? It's because the European Union is a regulator. The European Union is a massive market, a massive economy that stands up to all the big corporate giants and says things like, "You must protect privacy. Apple, get rid of your stupid chargers" so we stop creating so much waste with all these electrical chargers. The European Union is a consumer protection agency. It's an Elizabeth Warren-style consumer protection agency.

Andrea Chalupa (00:24:46):

And that is why you have all these bad actors and dark money trying to break it apart. They were successful by chipping away Brexit and now British citizens have a right to be extremely fearful and concerned about the quality of their food, the quality of their products, because they're not going to go through some rigorous oversight that exists with the European Union. That's what's happening in the US with hypercapitalism and captured agents on both sides of the aisle who are essentially corporate lobbyists. And it's not just the obvious names like Manchin and Sinema. Take a close look at Senator Dick Durban out of Illinois, who is the chairman of the Judiciary Committee. Why the hell is he so slow to bring in all these same judges that we desperately need to counter McConnell and Trump packing the courts to the tune of 30% of judges across America are now far-right ideologues?

Andrea Chalupa (00:25:43):

Including an idiot Trump appointee who's totally inexperienced and inappropriate to be on serving in the position, who got rid of the mask mandate and now suddenly COVID is back with vengeance and now everyone we know has COVID, right? So Durban is somebody to look out for. We talk about the obvious names, but there's a lot more people that are hiding behind the flashier senators who are clearly captured corporate lobbyists. So that's why all this is happening, is because people are getting rich off it in some way, shape, or form. People are protecting their careers. People are protecting their power, their access, and so forth. Meanwhile, it's the good people, the true people, who are sticking their necks out to ensure that we live in a free and functioning democracy who are paying the price. And that brings us to Reality Winner. In the beginning of the show, we ran an extraordinary clip from her interview with *60 Minutes*.

Andrea Chalupa (00:26:32):

And the big reveal was that—which we've already knew, but they laid it all out there—the big reveal of that clip is that Reality Winner, her sacrifice ensured the protection of our midterms in 2018, which in turn brought a much-needed blue wave to power, an extraordinary historical number of women into Congress, and we needed this at a time when Trump was weakening our government from within, purging, harassing, terrorizing law enforcement that was trying to hold him accountable in the Russia investigation, and essentially trying to lay the groundwork of a Trump family dictatorship. We saw that, obviously—the culmination of that—with his violent coup attempt on January 6th, which he should be in jail for already because the crime was out in the open. As Sarah pointed out, 9/11 was more shadowy, but this was out in the open to the point where we announced a coup special on it.

Andrea Chalupa (00:27:33):

Like, “The Trump family's gonna be tailgating the Trump coup, why don't we all get together and talk about it, ‘cuz this is happening. It's going to happen.” We saw it. As we saw in these January 6th hearings, there was a Twitter employee that couldn't sleep at night because this person saw what was happening. It was a crime out in the open, and given this open and shut case, don't believe the fancy legalese that people try to try to muddle the truth and confuse you and make you feel that you have no authority on believing your own eyes and your ears. Trust your eyes and ears. This was a crime, open and shut case, out in the open. The fact that Trump himself has not been indicted yet is an international emergency. This guy should have been in jail already.

Andrea Chalupa (00:28:20):

That's a fact. That is a fact. Even the Mueller Report is a charging memo. Meanwhile, you have people like Reality Winner, and I wanna get back to her story because it's critical. Reality Winner is a decorated

army veteran who served our country. She speaks several languages fluently and helped determine which terrorists to kill before they killed US soldiers and their support teams in Afghanistan. Reality Winner witnessed the commander-in-chief, the President of the United States, Donald Trump, brought to power with the Kremlin's help—this was a well documented crime as shown by the 400 page Mueller Report. It exposed the vulnerability of our hodgepodge election systems that were hacked. The election systems in every single state were hacked. We did not find that information out until much, much later. And initially in the days after... I just almost called it the 2016 presidential election, January 6th, because they're both coups. Days after the 2016 election, there were denials. There were denials by the government at the time that there were any issues with our elections that day.

Andrea Chalupa (00:29:23):

Oops, nevermind. All 50 states were hacked. We find that out much later. And many, many idiots in the press—including at *The Intercept*, which Reality Winner leaked to—many of these idiots, especially on the left, were aggressively trying to downplay the Kremlin's attack on our democracy even though it followed a well-worn playbook by the Kremlin against Ukraine. The Kremlin was very much staying in its lane. You know when you're good at something and you just wanna keep doing that something because you're so good at it and the skills come easily to you? That's called staying in your lane. The Kremlin stayed in their lane when they attacked our democracy. Yet many idiots in the press acted like their attack was some far-fetched spy novel and laughed at those who pointed out that this is what the Kremlin does. This is literally what they have years of experience doing.

Andrea Chalupa (00:30:18):

It's like if someone wins a pie baking contest, don't be surprised if they bake a delicious pie. Idiots in the press were like, "How could pie baking champion Vladimir Putin make such a delicious pie?" It's because that's what he does. It just doesn't make sense because that's just what he does. You know, he makes those pies in the form of attacking democracies using cyber warfare, dark money, bribes, spies, useful idiots, honey pots, and so forth. Bots, a whole bot network. That's the Kremlin's award-winning pie recipe and the idiots in the press still couldn't believe it. So that's why Reality Winner had to step forward, and thank God she did. She risked her life, her career and her freedom to point out the obvious to provide written proof in the form of a highly classified leaked NSA document confirming that the Kremlin had aggressively hacked our elections in 2016.

Andrea Chalupa (00:31:12):

Here's the thing: That document should never have been classified in the first place. The American people have a right to know. Election commissions and state governments have a right to know. The NSA keeping this document a secret made our elections vulnerable. And I know some in the NSA might say, "Well, what Reality Winner did was inform our enemies how to navigate our election systems, how to take advantage of the vulnerabilities by making that leak public." Well, you know what? Our enemies already have that information. That's what makes them our enemies. They're determined to bring us down. The superstar cyber warfare operatives at the Kremlin, in Iran, in China, do not need Reality Winner to know how to trick an election worker in Milwaukee who still has an AOL email address how to click on this shoe sale link or whatever. They know how to get us.

Andrea Chalupa (00:32:13):

It's not sophisticated warfare when it comes to our election systems because our election systems are a hodgepodge. All the states do their own thing. There are all these privately-owned corporate vendors

that don't wanna be bothered in making the expensive hires and paying healthcare so you can have the right team of cybersecurity experts and so forth. The Kremlin didn't need Reality Winner. They knew what to do in infiltrating our system. So that's nonsense. The NSA was letting the American people down once again by keeping this extremely important information top secret. That itself is a crime, okay? Reality Winner did what Reality Winner had no choice but to do. She served her country by sticking her neck out to expose the vulnerabilities and those vulnerabilities were then addressed, thanks to her. Reality Winner ensured that government functioned how government is supposed to function: efficiently.

Andrea Chalupa (00:33:07):

She made sure government works and our enemies from the Koch political network to their puppets and the Republican Party, they're trying to make government fail, right? Because then they can gobble up government resources, privatize everything and jack the prices and profit from it. And they can get rid of accountability and watchdogs and all of that. They want government to fail. We've done shows on that in our must-listen-to spring series and our interviews with Nancy McClean and Anne Nelson. So, they want government to fail. Reality Winner was fighting to ensure that government worked. Reality Winner being attacked for ensuring the government works is a sign of a dysfunctional system. It's dystopian and therefore President Biden must pardon her unconditionally to ensure that other American patriots stepped forward when government fails to ensure that our systems are strong and healthy and that the American people and our democracy are protected.

Andrea Chalupa (00:34:05):

It's really that simple. And if President Biden, who campaigned on the soul of our democracy and spoke in plain terms about the authoritarian threat, if he does not pardon Reality Winner, it would embolden our enemies like Russia and the rabid far right, the actual Nazis here who are trying to weaken America from within. Pardoning Reality Winner is a national security priority given that our democracy depends on brave patriots to step forward when the system is malfunctioning. And it's going to malfunction because we have so many cards stacked against us right now. We've talked about those on the show. Also, if you're somebody who's speaking out about Julian Assange and Edward Snowden and not Reality Winner, you may have an agenda. The fact that so many on the left ignore this brave young woman, yet fall in line when it comes to Snowden and Assange shows a lack of critical thinking by so many on the left. The idiots who listen to Chomsky when he blames the victims for Russia's genocide against Ukraine because he's so frustrated with the pace of change in the US—

Andrea Chalupa (00:35:07):

—so Ukrainians must be painted with a broad nonsense brush and stereotypes because the US supports Ukraine—too many agenda-driven idiots on the left are fighting their own proxy war against Ukraine. Meanwhile, Patriots like Reality Winner are risking their lives to protect them and they can't even be bothered to understand the impact she has made because some super cool hipster nihilist somewhere told them that there's no way in hell Russia attacked our election in 2016, even though that is literally what Russia has a long history of doing, namely against Ukraine. Right? So the bottom line is Joe Biden must pardon Reality Winner immediately and stop listening to Chomsky, who knows jack-all about Ukraine.

Sarah Kendzior (00:35:49):

Yeah, definitely do not listen to Chomsky on Ukraine. He has things to say about America that are true. I mean, it's such a shame because he has actual intellectual credibility and good essays, good ideas, and is a disaster—as are so many of his generation—when it comes to the corrupt or authoritarian regimes of the former Soviet Union, and why NATO exists, and what those countries are like now and what the dynamic is between the US and Russia, which of course under Trump was a partnership of oligarchs, mafiosos, plutocrats, and the worst public officials, which brought us to the 2016 election, which exploited all of the things that Chomsky rightly criticizes in American government society and economy. Just a note to add, I'm not sure you mentioned this. I was reading the *cbsnews.com* report about Reality Winner, about her interview, where they outright say that two former US officials told CBS that Reality Winner helped secure the 2018 midterm elections.

Sarah Kendzior (00:37:00):

So it goes beyond just her not doing harm. It means that she actually did well. You know, she helped establish a more secure, more fair, more just system. And this is as all of us were deeply worried about hacking in addition to the partial repeal of the VRA and all of these voter suppression laws that had been passed on the ground. We had just contended with a large number of hacks in the Obama administration; the hacking of the State Department, the DoD, the RNC, the DNC—obviously we all know about that—so this is very much in line with it. It should not have been viewed as shocking. It really is amazing how many things that are just baseline incidences of corruption, I mean, granted extreme corruption, are viewed as conspiracy theories or implausible by people who spend their lives looking at abuse of power, looking at imperialism, looking at state crimes. I mean, 9/11 and the aftermath, whether it's the wars that followed or the botched investigation, is an example of this.

Sarah Kendzior (00:38:07):

Everyone should kind of be on the same side here. It's not partisan, it's about an attack on institutions and it's about corrupted institutions helping a bet that attack either, in the incidence of the crime, which was true of Trump's election or the January 6th attack, or the aftermath with 9/11, although there's obviously things worth looking at in the run up to 9/11 as well. We should all be able to get on board together, demand transparency, demand accountability, not bow down to corrupt power, not accept official narratives at face value without being given evidence and proof and the respect of our officials. It's very sad that we've gotten to this point, because it's just one thing leads to another. When you don't have a continuum of accountability and then you mix it in with these kind of knee-jerk reactions when presented with something that might seem really wild, even when it's documented on paper like Reality Winner presented, you know, she presented an actual physical document of Russian election interference into an American election, people still don't wanna believe it because it either frightens them too much or it runs up against the arguments they have made thus far and are clinging too desperately and they don't want to reevaluate.

Sarah Kendzior (00:39:31):

But everybody needs to reevaluate. We need to reevaluate everything. That doesn't mean doing a 180 instantaneously. It just means reviewing our history, examining it critically, thinking it through, you know, all those things that Republicans are currently trying to ban people from doing in school, all the things that the pundits—especially the legal pundits bleating on cable news—want you to avoid in favor of just trusting the plan. Do them anyway. Do them for the good of this country and do them for the good of yourself.

Andrea Chalupa (00:40:06):

Exactly. And I did mention repeatedly that Reality Winner, her sacrifice, protected the 2018 midterm elections, but it's very good that you made that point again because it cannot be made enough and it should go on t-shirts that Reality Winner protected our elections. Reality Winner protected our elections. Nancy Pelosi became Speaker of the House in 2018 because Reality Winner sacrificed everything to protect our elections.

Sarah Kendzior (00:40:35):

Oh, the grim irony. But go on.

Andrea Chalupa (00:40:37):

Now Democrats are abandoning her and it's disgusting. This isn't a political pardon. It's not what Jared Kushner did, dangling all these pardons to the loyalists, the people that helped his father-in-law try to violently overthrow our democracy so they could stay in power. Ivanka was there by her father's side tailgating what was about to become a violent coup attempt. Ivanka called them patriots. Jared Kushner conveniently just landed that day on a flight, but he was part of that larger operation dangling those pardons. This isn't the kind of pardon we're talking about. This is a classic Jimmy Stewart *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* pardon where you have an American Patriot who sticks their neck out to protect us, protect us as a democracy. This is a national security pardon. If you do not have more people like this, if you do not send the message that you're gonna watch their back, they're not going to be there next time when we desperately need them. And we might need them very, very soon.

Andrea Chalupa:

Trump is going to run again. Trump needs to run again in order to avoid accountability, and he's going to run again. The Republican Party is the Trumpian party. And you might have false comfort because you heard some pollster on TV tell you that the January 6th hearings are being effective in making Republicans lose interest in Trump and there are all these other Trumpians like DeSantis and others who are smarter versions, more slicker versions, more palpable versions of Trump that will take his place and dethrone the king... The king's the king and he is still alive and if he decides to run, you'll see, they're all gonna fall in line behind him. Ronna McDaniel is gonna be seeking his praises all over Fox News. Fox News will fall in line because they're gonna want the White House. They're gonna want their judges. McConnell's gonna fall in line because these people are cold blooded. Alright? It's still Trump's Republican Party through and through so we need to do everything we can to protect patriots who are sacrificing everything to ensure that we do not fall into a dystopian abyss.

Sarah Kendzior (00:42:44):

I just wanna say something real quick on that, which is that the people who are backing up this empty and deeply destructive argument that somebody running for political office cannot be indicted for a crime, they are extremely dangerous people. They are enemies of democracy. We're seeing this argument being used about Matt Gaetz, a child trafficker. They're justifying the lack of indictment for a crime that was documented long ago as he continues to, you know, reap damage. We see it with the insurrectionists that are in Congress and we're going to see it with Trump. You know, they use this pretext, which Garland alluded to yet again, citing Bill Barr saying, "Oh, it's too political. It contradicts the person running for office." These people are out there now committing incredibly serious crimes, crimes against children, crimes against democracy, crimes against the public, crimes against national security.

Sarah Kendzior (00:43:39):

They are active participants. This is not just about the past. It is about the present and it is about the future. And so when Trump sees this happening, when he sees how the DOJ is reacting to these others, he gets a green light. He's saying, "Okay, if I run for office, Merrick Garland will not indict me. New York state, no one will indict me. I have a free pass." That's how this is being treated. So no one should be treated as above the law. We cannot have a system where if you declare candidacy, you're suddenly able to go on a crime spree and face absolutely no repercussions, but that is the system that the American DOJ has devised. And it, I mean... I'm outta words on this. You can go ahead.

Andrea Chalupa (00:44:26):

It's infuriating. Basically, we should just tape ourselves hitting our heads against the desk.

Sarah Kendzior:

Yeah.

Andrea Chalupa:

So everyone in the DOJ is complicit. If you have on your resume for the rest of your life that you were at the DOJ during the years, 2021, 2022 and so forth, you will be accountable. Anywhere you go, people should get in your face and be like, "What the hell did you do to our country?"

Sarah Kendzior:

Mmhmm <affirmative>

Andrea Chalupa:

These are criminals committing crimes out in the open. Stop allowing corruption to flourish, stop allowing corruption to win. There's no way out of an authoritarian state. If a dictatorship takes hold, who's gonna sacrifice their children to overthrow it? Who's gonna do that? Your kids, idiots at the DOJ? All of you are complicit. It's not just Merrick Garland. All of you are complicit because you're all allowing this to happen.

Andrea Chalupa (00:45:13):

You need to go into Merrick Garland's office and insist, insist, insist on accountability. The crime happened out in the open. Enough, already. Stop with the charade. It is a charade. We see it. And it's disgusting. And you guys are all criminals. Okay. So... [laughs] This is how Sarah and I talk on the phone and we now we record it. That's the podcast [laughs]. So we're gonna go into what we can do because we're part of the solution, whether we like it or not. Fighting for your democracy, it's a coalition. And yes, we have a lot of weak links in our coalition and it makes our jobs harder and we have to work harder, but that's just the reality of it. It's going to take all of us to stop this. It is, wherever we are.

Andrea Chalupa (00:45:56):

We have to stay engaged and fight like hell with whatever we can. And so think of it this way. In cyber security, if a hacker wants to get into your computer, they can. You can't stop them. Cyber security, what it does is it puts up as many roadblocks as possible—like two step verification, for instance—to make it harder for the hacker to get in, so they eventually give up. It's like this. Imagine if a burglar, a robber goes

to your house and you've got all these security systems, he's gonna be like, forget this, I'm gonna go to the next house, which doesn't have these systems because it'll be an easier way to get in . It would be an easier job. That's cybersecurity. You try to make it as hard as possible for the robber to break into your house. You put all these roadblocks up.

Andrea Chalupa (00:46:40):

That's how we need to think about our democracy: putting up roadblocks. For instance, with the Affordable Care Act, the Republicans in Congress tried to kill it. They brought it to the Supreme Court to try to kill it. It hasn't been killed yet, thank God. And so that's why you need to fight to put up as many roadblocks as possible. You need to elect as many good people to office as possible. You need to reelect even the miserable people in your coalition because at least you have, you know, some allies that you can negotiate with, like the Manchins and Sinemas. They suck to the the high heavens, but at least you protect your majorities in the Senate and the House that way. These are all roadblocks. You need to pass as much legislation as possible. You need to elect as many judges as possible.

Andrea Chalupa (00:47:24):

You need to ensure that your independent media is healthy and preserved. You need to establish norms. You need to ensure culture. You need to ensure visibility of historically marginalized groups. These are all collectively roadblocks that make it much harder for the actual Nazis to steamroll our democracy and overtake us, because they're actual Nazis that we're up against. Turning Point USA, a student action summit in Florida which featured Trump, had actual Nazis recruiting outside. They saw this as a recruiting opportunity. Conservatives are idolizing Nazis like Viktor Orban, the wannabe dictator of Hungary who has declared all out war on what's left to democracy and free speech in Hungary. Orban just gave a speech about the pure blood of Hungarians and how Hungarians don't mix with so-called dirty races. This is Nazi rhetoric. Orban is a Nazi and the Nazi Tucker Carlson has glorified him on his Fox News show, which has actual sponsors.

Andrea Chalupa (00:48:24):

People paying money. People forced with their cable subscriptions to pay for Tucker Carlson's salary, an actual Nazi. So if you have the cable subscription, you're paying for Fox News. You're paying the salary of a Nazi who's out there recruiting other Nazis. So I just wanna make clear that we're up against actual Nazis here. There was a huge Nazi homegrown effort in the lead up to World War II. Charles Lindberg was a famous example. Corporate America was on board with the America First Committee, which was code name for Nazi America. Right? You had Nazi Youth in America, you had Madison Square Garden packed with Nazis, doing an actual Nazi rally against banners of George Washington. So yeah, these guys are back in a very big way. They're running for office. They are promoting the Big Lie. They're trying to become election officials so they'll have a much easier time in doing a coup next time and taking over our democracy, consolidating power and staying in power.

Andrea Chalupa:

We're really up against that. That's what's happening. Alright? And you see it all. You saw it all on January 6th. And I wanna say, you know, yes, I am somebody that's spent decades, like Sarah, on authoritarianism. Just like Sarah, I see the disaster coming. Our internal operating systems, even when we're at rest, even when we're with our friends and family doing something else, we're still hyper vigilant. Every time I have moments, you know, with my kids, with my friends, I soak them in because I

just don't know what the future will hold. I have these blooming nightmares where the vision in front of me just completely shifts and I see the end game of all this. I see how disastrous it's going to be.

Andrea Chalupa (00:49:58):

And I hold onto my kids extra tight because I don't know how much time we'll have together, all of us. You know what I mean? That's my internal thought at all times. And I know that's Sarah's too because we have these conversations all the time and that's why we have this show, to help us through it because we can't silence that. We can't turn it off. It's not a neurosis. It's just, we have a certain expertise we've devoted years to, and we see it all now. It's out there in plain sight. You cannot turn that off. You can't turn off the truth. You cannot turn off facts. My experience also includes, since I was a child, thanks to my mother, who was a champion of child safety laws—she passed the child car seat law in California, the seatbelt law.

Andrea Chalupa (00:50:43):

So I grew up seeing that it's normal for a woman to take matters in her own hands and fight like hell and transform the laws in your country and save lives. To me, that was normalized as a child. She would change my diapers on a state senator's desk. And we did an interview with her. You could listen to it. Her name's Tanya Chalupa. Google "gaslit nation tanya chalupa" and you'll find the interview, a case study of what she did and how she did it. So because of my mom, I was very young and working on Democratic races, campaigns, interning, I interned for the governor of California when I was 16 years old, still in high school, I interned on Capitol Hill. I was a community organizer straight outta college working on races. I volunteer to get out the vote in big elections and now every election. This is very normal to me.

Andrea Chalupa (00:51:29):

As bad as I see things are, as derelict of duty as I see democratic leadership, I do have a lot of optimism because the Democratic Party that I started with as a child, it's changed. It's gotten more progressive. It's gotten more inclusive. There's more women. There's more non-white people. There's more openly gay and proud people. I remember when gay marriage was on the ballot in Bush's reelection campaign. Carl Rove made sure it was there to drive out the Nazi vote. And I remember these two lesbians in our campaign office who were staring in disbelief at the election results that night. I remember just going to my car and crying. And now you have Pete Buttigieg who's probably one of the most effective if not the most effective communicator in the Democratic Party and he and his husband celebrating the birth of a child and starting a family.

Andrea Chalupa (00:52:19):

That's all normalized, as it should be. That's the culture, that's life and we need to protect that and preserve that. That's sacred. And so I've seen a big sea change. What I'm telling you is the Democratic Party used to be full of super nerds like me working in these empty offices because no one wanted to show up because it wasn't cool, and now it's super cool to run for office. Now you've got this AOC effect, you know? And things are getting better. We have one of the most progressive congresses we've ever had, one of the most diverse congresses we've ever had, and things are changing. And they did not change on their own. They changed by people getting involved, staying engaged, doing what they could with where they were, with what they had and that's the name of the game.

Andrea Chalupa (00:53:01):

We are the coalition. We are an extremely important part of this coalition and I'm telling you all right now: If you want to protect our democracy, especially from the Trumpian candidate that is guaranteed to run in 2024 to knock off Biden, it's going to be a really hard fought race in 2024 for the White House given Biden's age, global inflation will not go away at night, given that Putin is gonna throw everything he can to try to seize the White House again for the Republican because he has to. He has to. He needs to try to escape sanctions and get that all overturned. Putin's at war with us. Russia's at war with us. We're up against the Kremlin and the GOP in 2024 and as we all know, the GOP has no problem taking help from the Kremlin.

Andrea Chalupa (00:53:44):

So if you want to protect our White House, our democracy from becoming a black hole dictatorship, you need to fight like hell now in the midterms because there's a lot of governor races and those governors are going to help protect the sanctity of our elections in 2024. So fight like hell in the midterms to create as many barriers. Remember the cybersecurity metaphor. Create as many barriers as possible from them steamrolling our democracy. You have in Pennsylvania, Josh Shapiro, the wonderful attorney general running for governor against a Trumpist. You have Gretchen Whitmer in Michigan. There was a whole Trumpist kidnapping plot to kill her. She's running for governor. You have Steve Sisolak in Nevada running for governor. You have Tony Evers in Wisconsin running for governor. Pennsylvania, Michigan, Nevada, Wisconsin, these are the states we absolutely must win in 2024 to protect the White House.

Andrea Chalupa (00:54:46):

These were states that of course were hacked in 2016 to help bring Trump to power. We must protect them. If we protect these states right now in the midterms, we stand a better chance of protecting our democracy in 2024. So if you wanna win the White House in 2024, if you wanna fight off the Trumpists and the Kremlin in 2024, if you wanna secure what we have left of our democracy, you need to stack the deck now in the midterms. You need to fight like hell for these governor races. Join me in adopting these states. Join me in donating what you can to these states, make whatever phone calls, letter writing, amplify on social media these states. These races are such important races to win in order to preserve what's left of our democracy and put up these cybersecurity like roadblocks, right? If you win those races, you protect our democracy from the Big Lie, from actual dictatorship, because guess what's around the corner?

Andrea Chalupa (00:55:39):

The Supreme Court agreed to see a controversial gerrymandering case out of North Carolina, so they're going to look at it this year and then decide on it next year. And if they decide in favor of Republicans in North Carolina, what's going to happen? That's going to give power to the state governments to decide election rules and it's going to get rid of a system of checks and balances within those states. The state supreme courts will not have oversight over state elections. The Supreme Court with the Tucker Carlson Fox News Trumpian majority, with Kavanaugh, Barrett, Thomas, Alito, Roberts being the scary swing vote, those guys are gonna decide our elections, right? The North Carolina gerrymandering case is a game over for our democracy. And it's just ridiculous. It's like they're chopping off all of our limbs in a vicious gunfight. If this happens, it's game over.

Andrea Chalupa (00:56:37):

So how do you protect us from what will be left? You need to make sure that Josh Shapiro becomes the next governor of Pennsylvania, Gretchen Whitmer is governor of Michigan, Steve Sisolak, Nevada,

protect Tony Evers in Wisconsin. You need to ensure that these states at least have governors that are Democratic and that the state legislatures have as many Democrats as possible because pretty soon these state governments will be deciding our elections for us and determining which electors represent that state in the electoral college. Nevermind how the people voted. You see that in Sarah's state, Missouri, where the people are passing these referendums for positive, progressive change and those people-powered referendums are getting vetoed by the state government. That's how elections will be. And guess what? What I'm describing is what Trump wanted. It is what drove Trump and Giuliani's strategy for their Big Lie.

Andrea Chalupa (00:57:31):

They were trying to overturn our democracy violently. And if that didn't work, then they were at least trying to stall for time so that the states could do something illegal by overriding the will of the people and setting their own electors. Trump appointed three judges on this Trumpian Supreme Court. The Supreme Court might make that strategy now legal. The Supreme Court might legalize the Big Lie. And the only way we can protect ourselves against that is following the cybersecurity strategy of putting up as many roadblocks as possible against these guys. That's all we have left. You can do that now in the midterms. Do that now in the midterms by adopting any of these races. Adopt Pennsylvania, adopt Michigan, adopt Nevada, adopt Wisconsin. Do not give to the central Washington, DC-based Democratic Party, give to the candidates directly. Give to the candidates directly. Give to them directly because they will control how to use the funding, right? And so that's it. The resistance against the Nazis—actual Nazis—is a coalition. And we, we, the people, we in our communities, we are extremely important, the most important leaders of that coalition. And yes, we have weak links. Their dereliction of duty is forcing us to work harder, but that's where we are right now. We're the resistance against Nazis.

[theme music - roll outro credits]

Andrea Chalupa (01:01:33):

Our discussion continues and you can get access to that by signing up on our Patreon at the Truth-teller level or higher.

Sarah Kendzior (01:01:38):

We want to encourage you to donate to your local food bank, which is experiencing a spike in demand. We also encourage you to donate to Oil Change International, an advocacy group supported with the generous donation from the Greta Thunberg Foundation that exposes the true cost of fossil fuels and facilitates the ongoing transition to clean energy.

Andrea Chalupa (01:01:57):

We encourage you to help support Ukraine by donating to Razom for Ukraine at razomforukraine.org. Do not donate to the Red Cross because your money will never reach Ukraine for the most part. Please donate locally, and Razom for Ukraine is an organization that works there on the ground. We also encourage you to donate to the International Rescue Committee, a humanitarian relief organization helping refugees from Ukraine, Syria, and Afghanistan. Donate at rescue.org. And if you want to help critically endangered orangutans already under pressure from the palm oil industry, donate to the

Orangutan Project at theorangutanproject.org and check the products you buy for palm oil and don't buy them anymore.

Gaslit Nation is produced by Sarah Kendzior and Andrea Chalupa. If you like what we do, leave us a review on iTunes. It helps us reach more listeners. And check out our Patreon, it keeps us going.

Sarah Kendzior (01:02:50):

Our production manager is Nicholas Torres and our associate producer is Karlyn Daigle. Our episodes are edited by Nicholas Torres and our Patreon exclusive content is edited by Karlyn Daigle.

Andrea Chalupa (01:03:02):

Original music on Gaslit Nation is produced by David Whitehead, Martin Vissenberg, Nik Farr, Demian Arriaga, and Karlyn Daigle.

Sarah Kendzior (01:03:08):

Our logo design was donated to us by Hamish Smyth of the New York-based firm, Order. Thank you so much, Hamish.

Andrea Chalupa (01:03:15):

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